

Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

VOLUME XXIV.

ASHLAND, O., WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30, 1902.

No. 18.

Editorial

Patience

Have you not observed the large office of patience in God's economy, in nature, in providence, in grace, everywhere? Let patience have her perfect work, a piece of apostolic wisdom which we should not forget. Haste makes waste. There's more than luck in leisure. Growth, beauty, strength, solidity, permanency, all these things wait upon patience. You can not hurry the coming forth of the new life of the spring, the buds and flowers. You can not see the process of growth. It is so with the processes of grace, the growth of Christian character, the building of God's kingdom. The perfect work of patience will be beautiful in the end. In joy and prosperity we do not feel the need of patience, but when trouble comes, and pain, and disappointment, and chastening, and feebleness, and old age, then we need the divine patience to company with us in the weary journey. Have you ever thought of God's wonderful patience? Think of the patience he has had with you.

God's Will Concerning Us

Christian people erroneously refer to God's will as if it always carried with it the idea of pain, suffering, something hard to endure. When about to suffer a severe loss, or when some affliction lays hold upon them, they give expression as they think to the spirit of submission within them in these words: "The will of the Lord be done." As tho the will of the Lord concerning them always involved pain, loss, suffering sacrifice, the taking away of their friends, the crushing of their hopes, or the robbing of their property. Surely this is a mistaken view of our Father's will concerning his children. When some spiritual joy, some spiritual good, or even some temporal blessing, is about to come into their possession, do they say, "Lord, thy will be done?" Why not? Are not the divine joys and blessings, the rich gifts that come into our lives as verily expressive of God's will concerning us as are the pains and losses and sufferings visited upon us and even more so? For every pain, God's will brings us a hundred joys; for every loss, a hundred possessions; for every moment of grief and sorrow, days of gladness and rejoicing in the Lord.

When the innocent little babe which we have learned to love is removed from our home, in great grief and deep sorrow the Christian heart says: "Lord, thy will be done?" Do we say as much when the child is born into our home and becomes a member of the family? Is not the giving of a gift as much the Lord's will as the taking of it away?

Such was Job's view. In believing love he could say, "The Lord gave and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord." He recognized the will of God in the giving of the gift as well as in the taking of it. And so it is in all life's experiences. The coming of the good gifts into our lives and into our possession is too often interpreted as a "streak of luck," but the taking away of these gifts is interpreted as God's will concerning us. Do not both nature and revelation teach us that the reverse of this interpretation is true? That the sickness which visited your home is in harmony with God's will may be questioned. That the removal of a dear one from your heart and home thus breaking a once happy family circle is an expression of God's will concerning you may be true and it may not. If thru sheer negligence you have left a deadly poison within easy access of your child, from the taking of which death ensues; or if thru the neglect of proper sanitary regulations or the observance of the laws of cleanliness, disease has made inroads into your home from which death results; or if thru disobedience your boy climbs a tree, falls to the ground, breaks a limb or sustains an injury from which he never fully recovers; is it just to interpret any of these events as God's will concerning us and our family? It is too often the case that the misfortunes which befall us, the losses we sustain, the trials to which we are subjected, are but the results of our own negligence rather than the decree of an absolute and arbitrary Ruler whose will is sovereign and supreme, in all and above all.

It is argued from the declaration of the apostle Paul that "all things work together for good to them that love the Lord," that therefore every event is decreed of God, and that nothing happens but by his will. But this is the statement of a partial truth only. The "all things" that work together for good are not necessarily *willed* of God. They are *permitted* by his will, and whether good or evil under the beneficent government of Almighty God the "all things" are made to work together for good. It is thus that Satan is foiled, our enemies defeated, our weakness transfused by divine strength, the evil designs of men overruled and made to subserve God's purposes, and we made to come out more than conquerors. Our gains and losses, our joys and sorrows, our achievements and defeats, these are made to work together for good, but that does not mean that our losses and sorrows, defeats and failures, are ordained of God and therefore *willed* by him. No, but the God that rules the universe subordinates all things that constitute the experiences of our lives, good and evil, gains and losses, joys and sorrows, triumphs and defeats, so that under his control the outcome is certain to result in essential good to *them that love the Lord*. We do not believe that